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Notes of the Week

By Sea, Air, and Land

GERMANY no doubt imagined she was sending us lively Christmas greetings when she despatched airships to Dover and Sheerness, which accomplished nothing. We, eager to reciprocate, went one better on Christmas Day in arranging for a surprise visit to the waters of Heligoland and the town of Cuxhaven. Extraordinary things have happened in this war: it will be long before the combined operations of cruiser, submarine, and seaplane are outdone. Of the seven devoted airmen who left the cruisers off Heligoland for Cuxhaven, six returned in safety: the seventh, the gallant son of Mr. Maurice Hewlett the novelist, unhappily disappeared, and it is to be feared sacrificed his life in this unexampled exploit. Apart from the unique and heroic character of the attack, the most interesting phase of the affair was the ineffectual attempt of the opposing Zeppelins to drop bombs on the cruisers and their inability to withstand the cruisers' high-angle fire. A fine and skilful performance by sea and air. On land all goes satisfactorily. In the West the Allies have made further notable advances, having secured St. Georges to the east of Nieuport and various positions held by the Germans right away south to Alsace. In the East and South-East, Russia has inflicted heavy chastisement on the Austrians advancing from the Carpathians, and, so far from the Germans investing Warsaw, Cracow is again the objective of Russian movements. Russia has taken 50,000 Austrians prisoners in a fortnight.

The American Protest

America has sent a note of protest to Great Britain on the treatment to which her commerce on the high seas is being subjected. She demands, in terms none the less firm because courteous, that her ships should not be stopped and overhauled, and her business delayed because England chooses to suspect them of carrying contraband. How far the protest is intended as a sop to American opinion it is impossible to say: the American Government knows perfectly well that the last thing the British Government desires is to subject any neutral country to unnecessary inconvenience. But neutral

Powers cannot live in a world a third of which is at war and enjoy all the freedom of movement which peace ensures. It is unhappily only too certain that whatever the American Government may decree there are many Americans eager to seize opportunities in a manner which Great Britain at least cannot allow. President Wilson does not seem very happy on the subject, for he warns traders that the Government can "deal confidently with the question of contraband only if supported by absolutely honest manifests." We have only two remarks to make on this protest: One, that the Americans may be thankful Great Britain, not Germany, commands the seas; two, that of the countries now making vast profits out of other peoples' troubles America is unquestionably making most.

Educating the Americans

No nation ever made more heroic efforts to influence public opinion in another than Germany has made in the United States. At the beginning of the war she started a weekly paper in New York to support the views which Dr. Dernburg and Count Bernsdorff have propagated with industrious futility. Americans are blatantly flattered in the hope that they will more readily agree to an indictment of Great Britain. England, tyrant, barbarian, and humbug, dares call in question the honour and the humanity of Germany. In this precious organ of "fairplay for Germany and Austria-Hungary" it is a little disconcerting to find six columns of excuses for Germany advanced by the historian Dr. Otto Seeck. We hope some of his history is more securely based than his assurance that the despatches of the German General Staff are "sources of unimpeachable veracity." To so impartial a mind Mr. Alfred Noyes' view that the Germans are not only losing their lives but their sanity will appear as only a wanton libel. All the same, Mr. Noyes, mere British poet though he be, appeals to Americans as neutrals to make Germany understand that she is "battering the ramparts of civilisation itself." How obtuse we British are!

Honour in the Second Degree

The war is exploding one superstition. For years we Britons have had German initiative and achievement in letters, music, science and the rest of it dinned in our ears, even more persistently than their militarism. We have now awoken to the fact that German initiative is a rather slender quantity. What Germany has really done with rare exceptions is to appropriate other people's discoveries and improve upon them. When she makes discoveries for herself, we gather from Mr. John Trowbridge in the *Atlantic Monthly*, she leaves others to apply them. Every credit must be given to her on that score, but the real honour belongs to the originator not the adapter. German work in science and art undoubtedly demands the grateful recognition of civilisation, but the gratitude should be in the second degree. Professor Sayce, Sir Henry Morris, and Sir E. Ray Lankester have started a discussion which will

be maintained with some warmth. They call in question the German title to honour in the first instance. Britons and Frenchmen have too long been sitting at the feet of the Germans. Take Robert Koch as a case in point: all that he did in bacteriology was founded on the original work of Pasteur. Sir E. Ray Lankester says Professor Huxley often remarked to him that German learning and scientific work was exaggerated. Certainly Prussia, which was responsible for the war, can claim little credit, whatever Germany, which she now dominates, may do.

Megalomaniac Culture

One of the most vigorous contributions to this debate on the triumphs of German culture comes from Sir Thos. G. Jackson. He is prepared to admit Germany's supremacy in music, but in all else on the side of the arts her claims, loudly trumpeted till we have begun more or less to accept them, are "simply amazing." She has, says Sir Thomas, in his letter to the *Times* on Tuesday, "produced but two really great painters, both of them, be it remarked, South Germans; no great sculptor, the admirable metal-work of Peter Vischer being all on a small scale. Their Gothic architecture was all borrowed from the French and spoiled; and their Renaissance work, when not verging on the grotesque, is commonplace. The best architecture in Germany is Romanesque work, which was borrowed from Lombardy." Cologne Cathedral is based on Amiens—a point that opens up a pretty field for speculation—but "like most German work, it is afflicted with megalomania." For instance, "the monstrous pair of steeples" on Cologne Cathedral or the "hideous monumental structure that vulgarises the meeting of two beautiful rivers at Coblenz." From such "culture" Sir Thos. Jackson prays Heaven to preserve the world.

Goths Still

Ruskin and Verdi both knew the German spirit better than some of us who have paid tribute in recent years to the work Germans have done in research, experiment, and the arts. Mr. J. G. D. Campbell, a fortnight ago, published an extract from "Fors Clavigera," in which Ruskin in 1874 said, "Blessing is only for the meek and the merciful; and a German cannot be either. . . . In that is the intense irreconcilable difference between the French and German natures." Verdi, too, in 1870, wrote that "the old blood of the Goth is still running in German veins; hard, intolerant despisers of all that is not German. . . . Men of brain but heartless, strong but uncivilised." What Ruskin and Verdi said forty years ago unhappily remains true to the letter to-day. All the more significant is it, therefore, to recall that Ruskin somewhere wrote: "All the great and noble arts of peace are founded on war; no great art ever yet was born on earth but amongst a nation of soldiers." Bernhardt might take that as his motto, though he would mean something very different from what Ruskin meant.

Special!

This is the season of plum-puddings and the time of special constables. The average Briton loves both, though his morrow's gratitude may not be equally distributed. Their association just now is illustrated by a story which reaches us. A popular actor—we wish we might mention his name—is a special constable. On Christmas night he was going on duty. He carried a mysterious-looking bundle which it was alleged he had found. He handled it with a respect wholesome but obvious. Arrived at the West End police-station where he would take up his arduous duty of civil guard whilst the citizen slept (or indulged in revelry), he drew attention to his discovery. The chances that it was a bomb or an infernal machine of some sort quickened the interest of his fellow-constables. They carefully prepared the way for an examination, and undid the parcel, only to find a plum-pudding! The actor, incorrigible joker, was forgiven on the ground that he lives only by making things seem something they are not.

To Albert, King of the Belgians

WE watched you, Sire, when Death's o'ershadowing
wing
Sweeping o'er Leopold, you attained the throne,
A prince beloved and honoured, yet a king
Unknown.

The sun of fortune shed its smiling rays
On Belgium's plains, where spinning-wheel and plough
Turned peacefully. Sire, those were happy days—
And now—

Now winter skies hang dark above the grave
Of martyrs, whose fair names alone remain,
And round the ashes of your throne the brave
Lie slain.

Yet, but for this, your glory had not been
Revealed to all men, for a hero's star
Shines clearest amid darkness and is seen
Afar.

A victor's palm awaits you on the morn,
But, Sire, you bear a nobler emblem now
In those immortal laurels that adorn
Your brow.

No symbol of your empire over men
In happier times spoke greater might, nor were
The brightest gems that decked your diadem then
So fair.

The smoke rolls thick around the battle lines
To-day; yet where you stand the clouds have paled,
For o'er the crimson mists your glory shines
Unveiled.

CATHERINE G. ADDY.

Mother-Women

BY COSMO HAMILTON

THEY were buried away in the country. No sound of the excitement of war came through the fast-yellowing leaves of the oaks and chestnuts that fringed the old worn walls of their park. Outwardly, since the land had been shocked by the declaration, and an instant later had closed up shoulder to shoulder, nothing had happened to jar the monotonous peace of the village. The golden harvest had been gathered in, and the plough was at work again turning up the stubble. Opulent ricks stood almost too close together in farmyards, holding up their pointed, thatched heads proudly to the sky. Swallows gathered on telegraph wires, waiting for the signal to wing away south. Children were born, men and women were married, and old people were laid to rest among their cronies and neighbours. The tongue of the old church bell gossiped as garrulously as ever. The days came and departed with the same measured tread and kindly manner, and the only faint wash of the great stir away in the towns that had reached that quiet corner had touched the village post office. On its windows were stuck notices that made women's hearts turn. "Men Urgently Wanted." "Your King and Country Need You. . . ."

But since the day when two strong arms had drawn them to a uniformed chest, and a gay voice had sung out, "Will write when I can; God bless you both!" two women up at the big house had drawn a little coldly away from the morning paper, neatly folded on the breakfast table—the mother and the wife. Not married a year, the son's call had come during the last quarter of his honeymoon. The mother had come back to the house from which the wife, in the old, unalterable order of things, had driven her. She was needed again. The son had asked her to mother his wife.

And so the days found these two women waiting. With chins held high and a sense of pride warming their hearts, they spent their hours together at needle-work, making things for the men who had the honour and the glory of the nation in their hands. And as they worked, talking of everything but the war, they waited and waited. Both knew what was inevitably to be expected in the case of the young soldier who had gone off as though to a game—he must be reported among the missing, wounded, or killed. He was one of those men who are never left out.

But in that quiet house so far away from the remotest echo of marching feet, framed so peacefully by oaks and chestnuts, set down in what was surely one of God's favourite gardens, the longest and oldest and most perpetual of all wars was being waged—the fight for a man by two women, one the mother and one the wife. It was determined and hard-fought, but never a word was said. Both were well aware how fierce it was by the sudden fire in the other's eye and by the erection of blockades in the secrecy of the night. Each held in a death-grip to the righteousness of her cause. This man could not be divided up.

When the mother sat down one evening after dinner to sew buttons on her son's shirts, the wife, to whom the very word button had never occurred, moved up her forces for a return blow. She went upstairs to her husband's dressing-room, locked the door, and hid the key. Not to be beaten, and to get a little necessary comfort from something that her son had touched, the mother, some nights later, mentioned the word headache and went up early. All on the *qui vive*, the wife suspected something, and so presently, mentally unable to remain inactive, she rose up, and, with the uncanny instinct of her sex, went straight to a little room at the end of a seldom-used passage which her man had fitted up as a workshop. She opened the door. The room was in pitch darkness. She put out her hand and touched the soft grey hair of the mother. Civilisation demanded a little laughter, a few light words; but the wife remained until the mother evacuated the position. That door, also, was locked.

And so the fight, to men so unexplainably foolish, to women so wholly natural and right, went on from hour to hour, from day to day. By every conceivable suggestion the mother laid it down that the son of whom she was so proud was hers, her property, her flesh and blood. By every ingenious counter-stroke the wife refuted the claim and drove the mother step by step from all her positions.

Finally, as in all warfare, civilisation was thrown aside. A despatch from one of the war correspondents, in which it was suggested that the young soldier's regiment had been cut to pieces, was permitted to appear. The two frightened women, refusing to believe that Death, in his helpless indiscriminacy, had laid his hands upon this very man, stood up and faced each other and spoke.

"You've locked doors and put forward your puny claim, but he's mine now, just as he was mine before he looked upon the world. Give me those keys. I will take my place among his things."

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"He's not yours, he's mine. I'm his wife, his love, his mate, his woman. He ceased to be yours when he found me. He is mine. You can't take my place."

"You have no other place than that of the woman who is to mother his children. I am first. I am the cause, the reason, the instrument. He and I are bound by indissoluble ties. Wait until you have *his* son and that son marries. It's the mother who counts, the mother, the giver of life, not the wife or the lover. I tell you he's mine."

Staggered with the irrefutable truth of the mother-woman's words, the sudden knowledge of the old, great, tragic, and beautiful fact that in all her phases, as wife, as mother, the woman pays for her gift and lays her love and her agony as a sacrifice on the altar of the next generation, the wife paused to reply, and in that pause was handed a telegram that made her flaming face as suddenly ashen as that of the elder woman whose eyes saw through the envelope.

"We regret to inform you that Lieutenant . . ."

The mother and the wife went into each other's arms. Their fight for possession of the man was over. He was not theirs. His mother country had claimed him.

And so they wept together and gave praise, for they had fought for a man.

The Mystery of Birth

THE old year is dying fast; soon we shall welcome in the new with a sigh of relief. It has been a year of trial, of restless uncertainty, and of sorrow, loss, and death that are only too sure. It will be good to turn our backs upon it, to open a fresh account, to turn over a new leaf, to begin again to write upon the scroll of life, to hope for better things from the days that are coming.

These divisions upon the calendar of time are purely arbitrary, and, in the eyes of the uninitiated, ill-chosen. Left to ourselves, we should open the New Year on the day that the first bud breaks from its sheath, or when the song-bird gladdens our hearts, when the feelings of birth and renewal and the stirrings of sentiment are abroad on the spring air, when the soul stretches out weary arms to the great Earth-Mother and cries, "Enfold me, renew me, awaken me to the new life of the young in heart!" But whatever the time chosen for the commencement of another year, the truth it expresses remains the same. Without these opportunities for renascence, for fresh beginnings, existence would be insupportable. What is sleep but the kind closing of weary eyes to one span of life, and waking but the birth of another day, the constant renewing of hope which alone renders life possible? What are the divisions of time but the closing of one door upon a past that is irretrievable, and the opening of fresh portals veiled in the mist of an unknown future? There are three supreme ecstasies in life—the joy of the mother in the birth of her first-born,

the rapture of the lover in the first dawning of love, the ecstasy of the artist in the moment of creation. In each of them is enfolded the secret of the mystery of birth, the principle of the perishable and the immortal, the giving of the one that the other may come into being.

The old year dies, but it has contributed its quota to the chain of Being; only because it has existed is the new year possible: our lives burn and flicker and wane like the flame of a candle, but it is a sacred light from which the lamp of all the ages yet to come is lighted, so that in reality its radiance is never quenched. The feast of Christmas draws to a close as the old year perishes, but before the year passes on its sceptre to another it has lived to see enthroned a little Child, the Incarnation of the principle of life eternal. The comprehension of this truth lies at the service of joy. The great festivals have been those which celebrated birth, or in other words the continuity of life. The joy of seedtime and harvest, the keeping of natal days, the feasts of the Church, have all been full of it. The existence of man is only comprehensible as he takes his place in the endless chain of life, as he realises his spiritual unity with the forces of birth and death. The weakening of nations, of civilisations, has always accompanied the darkening of that knowledge; when materialism takes the place of spiritual sight, joy languishes, energy perishes, hate usurps the place of love, and decay sets in.

The days of the Middle Ages were the most wonderful, and at the same time the most joyful, days of which we have cognisance. We call them by the name of the Renaissance. In them men and women formed themselves into bands who marched through the streets of the cities singing and bearing flowers from sheer gladness of heart. To-day a street procession is an almost invariable sign of the discontent of some portion of society, parading in the hope of betterment. These people of the Cinquecento had made a great discovery. They had found out the wonder of life, the power, the beauty, the romance, the infinite capacity that lay within the reach of the individual. It was a re-birth to the miracle of Life. Their art is full of it.

The greatest men never tired of painting the tiny babe lying on his mother's lap, her eyes dreamy with all the mystery of birth and motherhood that are woman's reward for the travail of giving life to her child—the babe lying with the introspective gaze of infancy, his sight not yet withdrawn from the spiritual realm whence he came, not yet focussed on the visible signs of existence.

Like the passing year, we have grown weary with the weight of knowledge, of experience. Our writers, our painters, our preachers, have lost the secret of joy. Problems obsess them, the mantle of learning hangs heavy on them, the heart of the little child is lost in the maze of human experience. But even now on the horizon the Birth Star is rising.

Men have shuddered at the red hand of Nature, at the cruelty of pain, the wantonness of death. In their

shadow the beauty of life has been dimmed. Fear has hung like a pall, hiding the sun of life from the majority of intellects in the recent generation. Faith has been lost in the terror of the unknown. Now, face to face with these things in their elemental shape, men are finding how little power they have over the spirit of life which is unquenchable. The most cheerful people in the world at this moment are our soldiers. Death and life and suffering have attained for them their true perspective. They have reached the other side of fear, have got beyond self-seeking or self-interest. Like the mother in her moment of anguish, they can rejoice in the giving which means the birth of another life. In the instance of the soldiers it is the life of an Ideal for whom they are laying down life, for the birth of freedom and honour in all lands and classes. Out of death cometh life, out of the old year comes the new, from the pangs of suffering comes the birth of new life and love. It is a mystery, but the quality of all beauty, whether moral or physical, is mysterious, and its secret is known only to those whom it concerns.

REVIEWS

The First Christian Emperor

Constantine the Great and Christianity. By C. B. COLEMAN. (Columbia: The University. London: P. S. King. 8s.)

AT a moment when the city which bears his name may again be about to fall into Christian control, any inquiry that seeks to put knowledge of Constantine the Great on a firmer basis has an added interest. About the Emperor who achieved the most momentous spiritual revolution in history has grown up a veritable jungle of legend through which many earnest students have sought in vain to make their way to truth and light. Constantine in his relation to Christianity is a profoundly fascinating figure, and Mr. C. B. Coleman, Professor of History at Butler College, Indianapolis, in one of the latest of the remarkable series of volumes published by the Faculty of Science of Columbia University, has laid scholars under a considerable debt by his investigation of the stories associated with the Conversion. His study divides itself into three sections, and the first Christian Emperor is regarded as having had "in European history three distinct spheres of influence, occupied respectively by the real, the legendary, and the spurious Constantine."

In Mr. Coleman's view, "the time has passed for the kind of history that is made up of unsupported traditions or that fills in its vacant spaces and obscure origins with untested stories." To eliminate legend from history is neither possible nor perhaps wholly desirable; a certain element of the legendary imparts colour and atmosphere, and after all probably brings us as near the truth as hard fact which cannot be quali-

fied and interpreted by attendant circumstances. The scientific historian, however, naturally refuses to accept anything which borders on the miraculous or is open to suspicion as a fraud. Constantine's conversion would in itself seem to be so momentous and in a sense romantic an event that it needed no embellishment to impress it on the world's imagination. Under his predecessors, "the Roman Government bent itself to the task of exterminating Christianity as an alien and hostile power. Under him and his immediate successors the resources of the State were often put at the disposal of the Church. The Empire, in addition to its already crushing burdens, took up the support of the Church and made itself the vehicle upon which the once persecuted religion rode in triumph to its task of establishing the 'City of God' upon the earth." Therein surely we have a fact beside which legend itself may be commonplace. A man's view, by whatever means, changed and a Pagan world became Christian with all that Christianity implied.

Into all the evidence as to this religious revolution of the fourth century it is impossible to go now; but Mr. Coleman's survey of the time and examination of such documents as are available and of the legends which have grown around the relation of Constantine to Christianity make an absorbing and illuminating study. The genesis of the legends, whether as to the man himself or as to his conversion, given in the narratives of James of Sarug and Moses of Chorene is not difficult to understand. "Historical writing among the Christians was as unreliable as among the pagans of the Empire. Forgeries, present in the religious writings of the heathen, were equally numerous in Christian writings. Even the leading bishops were 'ready to prove the truth of their faith by lies,'" says Mr. Coleman, on the authority of Seeck. Legends, like the good stories told in the smoking-room, seldom lose anything by repetition, and as Mr. Coleman neatly puts it, "men of the Middle Ages were skilled harmonisers of discrepancies." When we pass from the legends surrounding the conversion to the *Constitutum Constantini*, the Donation by which the Emperor was supposed to give land, privileges and authority to Sylvester as Bishop of Rome and Pope, we pass to a document which Mr. Coleman in the body of his work hardly knows whether to call "forgery or romance." As in his introduction he says "it has filled so large a place in the thought of Europe that we can justly call it the most famous forgery in history," we are in momentary doubt whether his "scientific criticism" is quite as scientific and conclusive as it seems to be. The doubt is merely momentary, because, after all, he only marshals in the ablest way the evidence which the research of others has provided.

How, by whom, and when was the document forged? The evidence points to eighth-century and Roman origin. "The forged document," says Mr. Coleman, "has become recognised as a composite resultant of ideas and forces lying deep in the life of the Middle Ages, with a history obscure and difficult but intensely

interesting. The materials for an understanding of this history are embedded in scores and even hundreds of documents surviving from the eighth and the ninth centuries, in peculiarities of style and vocabulary of various writers and of various chancelleries, in political and ecclesiastical crises which might have spurred men on to the creation of false evidence." It provides an excellent problem for sharpening the wits of scholars, and its importance is not merely one of history. It affects the status and the claims of the Holy See. For the student Mr. Coleman may not have much that is new to reveal, but he presents his material in such admirable literary form that we are constrained to regret it is not more readily accessible to British readers than is possible in a series issued by an American University.

Eton Memories

Eton in the 'Eighties. By ERIC PARKER. (Smith, Elder and Co. 7s. 6d. net.)

PLEASANT hours, tinged with wistfulness, are those we occasionally spend in recalling the events of school-days—the days of first steps in life, initiations into the laws of honour and "good form," and, possibly, into the most convenient way to break certain other laws which were made for our good but which did not appeal to us. School friendships that seemed so firm have vanished; our chums are doing their duty in other parts of the world; some have tried to keep up an intermittent correspondence, but cares of business and new ties intervene, and letters become fewer. So we fall back to dreaming, and call up the memories of those light, happy, irresponsible times. Not all our recollections are worth publishing for other people's entertainment; but Mr. Eric Parker has such a fine field to cover that his book needs no excuse. Eton is a national possession; the country has a right to know of its complex life, and here, complementary to "Eton in the 'Seventies," we have a full account of all aspects, from "fagging" to the characteristics of the various masters.

Humour abounds throughout these pages. The picture of twenty boys making toast—toast that was urgently wanted—round a huge fire is very amusing. The too-eager toaster found his slice either burnt or tipped into the ashes by resentful neighbours. "After that there were two alternatives, both with serious disadvantages. One was to cut a substitute slice from your own order of bread, which meant delay and consequent inquiry; the other, if the fallen slice was not entirely converted from bread into ash, was to brush, dust, and otherwise clean it, in the hope that it would be accepted without comment. There was generally not much hope." Episodes of filling the baths by arranging heavy books on the taps are related with gusto—"the danger, of course, was that you might forget that you had left the lexicon; this happened on several occasions, with diluvial results of a singularly complete nature." The chapter on the College "Books

and Magazines" makes excellent reading. The *Chronicle* gravely criticised the first number of the *Rambler*, and the editor of the *Rambler* cheerfully admitted that the whole of that number was written by himself. Other editorial experiences which caused considerable suffering were the efforts of the compositors to improve the poetic contributions—as when the lines—

The tall elms stirred, and stirring sighed,
And tossed their lusty arms on high

—appeared in print thus:

The tall elms stirred, and stirring sighed,
And tossed their susty grms on high.

The music of the College, under Barnby, was of a high standard. Previously, "the paid choir," says Mr. Parker, "was willing and skilled, and sang in tune, except when the choir-boys had been supplied before the service with nuts."

We have emphasised this aspect of the book because a delightful vein of boyishness runs through the whole; but it has its full share of serious reminiscence. On February 24, 1881, Major-General Sir Frederick Roberts, who had just returned to England after the relief of Candahar, visited Eton, and was presented with a sword of honour. "It is as an Etonian among Etonians that you are with us here to-day," said the Captain of the Oppidans in his speech. "We give it to you, every one of us, as our best to our best." "As a soldier I have spoken to those who hope to be soldiers," said Roberts in reply. "In a few years I hope my son may be enrolled among you, and it is my fervent hope that he may prove himself worthy of Eton, and that you in return may receive him with kindness as you have his father with honour." A splendid memory, heightened by our knowledge of later years!

Many names now familiar to us in the spheres of politics and literature occur in these pages, but we have no space to linger upon details. The masters, the old customs, the games, the "Fourth," all provide material for Mr. Parker's lively thought and busy pen. It is all in the best of taste and the best of cheer, with the note of sadness very lightly touched; whether a man be an old Etonian or not, he will be able to read this book with interest and pleasure, knowing that he is sharing first-hand information gathered and dispensed by one to whom "Floreat Etona" is as dear a wish as it was in the bygone days.

Artist and Realist

The Mason-Bees. By J. HENRI FABRE. Translated by ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS, F.Z.S. (Hodder and Stoughton. 6s. net.)

THERE is only one thing more interesting than great fiction written by a master, and that is fact, viewed through the medium of an equally masterly mind. To this latter category belong the books of Henri Fabre. They contain evidence of that form of genius which is the prime asset of the naturalist—the capacity for

taking infinite pains; and the record of the results of that capacity, written by a man who is at once an artist and an optimist—an extremely rare combination.

There are two classes of books on Nature. The first, where the writer makes her to speak through the language of science, where the principles of induction and deduction bring the whole into an orderly sequence, conforming to the laws which science has drawn up in a vain attempt to make Nature logical; the second and less frequent, where writer and science stand aside and let Nature speak without making the effort to interpret her in the light of intellect. These are the really great books from the point of view both of truth and of artistry, and to them belong the works of this French naturalist. Recently another volume has been added to the number which enrich our possessions, admirably translated and arranged by Mr. Alexander de Mattos. It deals with the mason-bees, and in particular with the homing instinct in them and in other animals, essays on which are included within its covers. But that is among the least of the trains of thought it lays open to its readers. Like a great picture, its value lies far more in what it suggests than in what it actually expresses.

It is a fascinating book, on account of its atmosphere, to read in our wet, grey, English winter. One senses the heat, the sun, the scents, the hum of the busy insect-world of the South; one basks on the river banks and delights in the gardens and widespreading flower-decked plains where the wild bees fly. One is warmed and comforted and enthralled.

In the book there is magnificent optimism. At the very moment of tragedy, when the ruthless hand of Nature asserts itself, when the edifice of the insect, the work of a lifetime, meets with destruction at the hand of another, when the very object of life itself is defeated, Fabre does not try to find a reason, to palliate or minimise the disaster, but says with another great poet and humanist, "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world"; and this conviction no amount of showing up the apparent futility of things can shake.

It is a remarkable commentary on the present. In the tiny workmen of the walls or pebbles, artists and architects as they are, we see the builders of Rheims, of Louvain and Ypres, raising up stately edifices, stone upon stone, statue by statue, not for themselves, but for generations yet to come; storing them with the honey of their genius, with the pollen of beauty and wit gathered from the treasure-houses of the ages. As with the bees, the enemy descends, the devastator, and overthrows that which he can never replace. Shall we apply to it the philosophy of Fabre, the man who has lived closer to Nature than any of whom we have knowledge, and whose faith in the ultimate Right has survived all the tests of a long and for many years unrecognised life? The optimist is the man who has imagination and faith, and his is the work which leaves an indelible mark on the world. Of such is Henri Fabre.

The Musical Future of Russia—I

BY D. C. PARKER

THOSE who know Russia best expect the war to have a profound effect upon her culture. To many people in England, Russia was for long a remote country of which they knew little. The gradually extending fame of the great authors Turgenieff, Dostoevsky, Tolstoi, and Gorki did much, however, to enlighten us. Then came the ballet and the opera, reminding us that the nation which owned an original and fascinating literature possessed also a new art and a school of notable composers. All those who love variety and believe that the different races of the world have a legitimate right to develop their culture according to their light hailed the artistic arrival of Russia with joy. Could it be that the great white empire of the Tsars had something to offer the older civilisations of the West? Could it really be that this music acted as a stimulant to those nourished upon Beethoven and Schumann, Wagner and Brahms? Could it be that immense artistic forces had for long been hidden under the cloak of a lingering mediævalism? It seemed so. For, while much of the Russian music struck us as being barbaric, it was infinitely human. One thing was certain—cultured people could no longer ignore Russia. She had proved herself to be in fact, as well as in name, Slavonic—*i.e.*, able to articulate.

While we regard the future of Russia as a musical nation with an appropriate spirit of expectancy, we must not be unmindful of the fact that, in a comparatively short time, much has already been accomplished. It is little over a century since Glinka, the first of the important composers, was born. But, while he achieved much in his own day, Russian music has progressed beyond all recognition in the last decade. Borodin, César Cui, Moussorgsky, Dargomijsky, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Glazounoff, Balakireff, Scriabin, and Stravinski are names well known wherever the history of modern music is studied. The activities with which they are associated would have been impossible had it not been for sustained enthusiasm and uncommon zeal, and the appearance of these composers is in itself a reminder that the Russian lives his life to the accompaniment of music. Here you have a race imbued with great spiritual qualities and a natural love of metaphysics. While the Russians have few avowed writers on philosophic subjects, their imaginative works are packed full of strange questionings. Doubts and broodings present themselves to these reflective folk. But the great mainstay of the peasant is his faith. Truly it is not without reason that one speaks of Holy Russia. So it will be observed that Russia has in plenty the first necessity for a vigorous artistic life—a soul. There is in all folk-music something wonderfully sincere. Even these wayward mannerisms which stamp a song as having come from this or that locality have about them a strange attraction. Where you have a people in whom there exists longing for articulation and susceptibility

to impressions you have the greatest requisites for a national movement in music. The Russian peasant songs are as valuable as the *ballini* of the early minstrels, and when one is tolerably familiar with them one is not at all surprised that so many composers should have either quoted or imitated them. Only by this means could musicians foster a spirit of national consciousness.

The creation of a new school is not accomplished without much trouble, and, in Russia, great difficulties had to be overcome. The influence of Germany was immense. What had Russia to set against the long and glorious history of the Germans in musical affairs? German achievements in this sphere are universally recognised. Every musician, of whatever race, must have felt inspired at some time or another when he realised what Leipzig and Dresden, Weimar and Bayreuth have meant to the world of music. But in their fight for the preservation of national traits the Russians have not been alone. Smetana found it a hard task to retain the Czech characteristics in the music of Bohemia, and Verdi was reported to have deplored the growing tendency of the "young Italy" school to write operas in which there was much that had its roots by the Rhine. To the musical public of Western Europe, Tchaikovsky, who enjoyed the greatest vogue of all the Russians, seemed at first quite uncivilised. But it is now recognised that both Tchaikovsky and Rubinstein were more or less German in their music, and I believe that they are not regarded as adequate representatives of Russian musical activity by the progressive party.

To us who view the matter from afar, the whole question is surrounded with difficulties. No doubt one must be a profound psychologist to understand the mentality of modern Russia, and in these matters it is almost impossible for the foreigner to detect the counterfeit, to lay his finger upon the work of the mere *poseur*. Yet, this apart, there remains the fact that, in order to write a symphony, you must recognise certain laws without which the work, whether by a Russian, a Frenchman, or a German, cannot possibly fulfil the demands of the form. You cannot have a Russian symphony if by that you mean a work from which anything which has its origin outside of Russia is rigorously excluded. On the other hand, you can have a Russian symphony if you mean merely that the prevailing colour is Russian, that the melodies are racy of the soil. While in Petrograd national aspirations have been strong, in Moscow a definite tendency towards cosmopolitanism has been evident. The future seems to hold much for the Petrograd coterie, for, if we are to see a further strengthening of national ambitions, we may take it that Russian musicians will be oversensitive to extraneous movements. A similar tendency is shown in the desire to banish foreignisms from the language, a proceeding which has an historical counterpart in the action of those Portuguese writers who endeavoured to preserve the character of their native tongue by abolishing the Castilian elements. And so,

if composers turn again to the peasants' art for inspiration and suggestion, we may feel assured that much sincere music will be born. For, just as the poets of Russia have gone to the *moujik* in order to learn the full expressiveness of the language, so will the composers seek in village and farm those songs and dances which reveal so adequately the soul of the people.

Shorter Notices

A Mystic Poet

WE have often wondered why it is necessary for professed mystics to be vague; also why no one has yet offered a clear definition of the faith and works of a mystic in modern times. In the two large volumes of the "Collected Poems of Arthur Edward Waite" (W. Rider and Son, 21s. net) the author seems to suffer chiefly from vagueness and length. The first volume has some lyrics, it is true, which may pass as pleasant verse. Here is quite a neat little presentation of a mood which most of us have felt:

Nature is pantomime; some force bestirs
The antic struggles of her characters,
And semblances of life imparts to each,
But no true motion and no gift of speech.
Some mask unknown stands at the stage's wings
And for each mimic actor speaks or sings,
While in the galleries and stalls we sit
But do not rightly catch one word of it.

As for the very long poems, there is much cloudy aspiration and confused language, any amount of platitude in rhyme and blank verse, but not much real poetry. We would read them all, every word, if we had a week to spare; but those we have read do not fill us with any enthusiasm. We have found more beauty and thought in a single lyric of George Meredith than in all these profuse pages.

Southern India

Colour-books always divide opinion as to their merits, and "Southern India" painted by Lady Lawley and described by Mrs. F. E. Penny (Black, 20s. net) will be no exception to the rule. Some of the fifty illustrations are very charming and perfect studies; others are defective, probably owing to the difficulties and limitations of the colour process. The single figures in their native costumes are distinctly pleasing, and Lady Lawley shows admirable eclecticism in the selection of her subjects, as she must also have shown considerable patience in their treatment. Mrs. F. E. Penny's text will help to bring the natives of Southern India to the fireside of the Briton who has never been to the East. She explains the difference between Mahomedan and Hindu in a simple and unpretentious way which will be helpful to many who could not describe their creeds and their customs in barest outlines, but lump all as natives. It is a book for a leisure hour in keeping with the spirit of the East, where Mrs. Penny says haste is unknown. "Haste is of the devil; only bad men run," says the Oriental.

Man and his World

As a rule, we know comparatively little about our bodies and the world in which they live and move; we leave it to specialists—to doctors and scientists—to study these matters and to advise us. A certain amount

of knowledge, however, is beneficial, and in the "First Books of Science" series (Macmillan, 1s. 6d. each) the information is conveyed in a delightful manner. "Physiology and Hygiene," by Gertrude D. Cathcart, M.B., B.Sc., avoids all the complex technical phraseology and explains in simple language the exquisite processes and equipments of the body, emphasising their operations especially with an eye to healthful development. "Geology," by Professor Albert Wilmore, D.Sc., deals with a subject which is too often regarded as "dry," but which is in reality one of the most fascinating studies imaginable. Once an interest in it is obtained, the most unpromising country walk betrays a store of unsuspected charms; the action of rivers and streams, the shapes of hills and valleys, the texture and colour of rocks, and a hundred other things observable by all, form constant incitements to thought and inquiry. Both these little books are well illustrated with diagrams and pictures that help the student to enter into the details of his work and elucidate the meaning admirably.

Britain and her Empire

The "history" we learned at school was too often a mere collection of names, dates, and unsatisfactory information as to places and persons whom we rarely vividly realised. It is recognised now that history must be taught in a different manner, and books are appearing which have the object of lighting up dull and distant times, of linking them into a chain which only ends at the present day. One of the best of these is "The Story of English Industry and Trade," by H. L. Burrows, M.A. (A. and C. Black, 1s. 6d.). Boys who have this as their history reader will need no urging to study the progress of their country—it is given in clear, comprehensive chapters from the times of the Domesday Book to the beginning of the twentieth century. The chapter entitled "Life in a Mediæval Monastery" is exceedingly interesting, and in other parts old ballads and poems are quoted which illustrate the various aspects of our national progress. The little volume may well be read by all who are desirous of learning the story of our commerce. "The Pupil's Class-Book of Geography," by E. J. S. Lay (Macmillan, 6d.), deals with the British Dominions in a lucid manner, and with it we might bracket "The Soldier's Geography of Europe" (George Philip and Son, 3d.), which has been specially prepared for the use of men in training. Both of these handy booklets, with their many maps and illustrations, will be found extremely useful in view of the problems which continually arise at the present crisis.

There is an immediate need of sea-boots, waders, waterproofs (khaki or black), and oilskins for the use of the troops, numbering many thousands, at No. 1 Base (France). Owing to the recent wet and stormy weather the camps are quagmires, and the tents are without floors. The men are never dry, night or day. Will yachtsmen and fishermen give what they can and so ameliorate the hardships of our soldiers waiting their "turn"? Depot for receiving above: 8, Beauchamp Place, S.W. All communications to be addressed to the wife of the commandant of No. 1 Base: Mrs. Bruce Williams, 22, Alexander Square, London, S.W.

The Theatre

"Henry V"

THE play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience—or may be the consciousness—of the people in this new hour of England's destiny." So one may imagine Mr. F. R. Benson in pensive mood drawn to an endeavour to combine art and patriotism. Henry V, these three hundred years past, has been played by many actors whose names are familiar in our mouths as household words; never probably has it been staged in circumstances better calculated to carry its appeal straight to the British heart. If, as every critic who ever commented on it—with the exception of Voltaire—has suggested, it is an epic drama showing the true King as true hero and leader of his people; if the King, as a King should, dominates throughout; if the play is the superb and finished study of an exceedingly interesting personality, neither a study in manners nor a romance dependent on plot, it is none the less a great undesigned invocation to unity of purpose and suppression of self in all that affects a nation's title to liberty and nationhood. The "call of the blood" is in every line of it, and, if Mr. Robert Courtneidge in his managerial capacity would, as we may be sure he would, drive home the moral which none who hears Mr. Benson and his gallant company can miss, he would lose no time in giving any hesitating mother's son a free pass to the Shaftesbury Theatre. Or let us put it another way, and say that every one who would not hold his manhood cheap, "whiles any speaks that fought" with French, Smith-Dorrien, and Douglas Haig should see "Henry V." The King's reproof to Westmoreland when he wishes that "one ten thousand of those men in England who do no work to-day" were with them—

If we are doom'd to die we are enow
To do our country loss, and if to live
The fewer men the greater share of honour,

must by its very simplicity and devotion serve to set aflame the smouldering embers of patriotism in the most complacent. "God for Harry, England, and St. George!" The cry rings through every moment of the play, notwithstanding that Mr. Benson himself shows a restraint which robs declamation of any touch of exaggeration or taint of mere theatricalism. The truth is the appeal is inherent, and Shakespeare's lines are broadsides from a very Dreadnought aimed at the heart and brain of any disinclined to subscribe unreservedly, "My country right or wrong." One can only wonder what the Germans who have appropriated Shakespeare as their own will make of such a play. Kultur will find no use for it, which may be its highest title to commendation. For some the fact that the "enemy" in the play is France is unfortunate; they forget the note on which it ends with the giving of Katharine to the King. Queen Isabel says, in blessing the union:

Never may ill office, or fell jealousy,
Which troubles oft the bed of blessed marriage,

Thrust in between the paction of these kingdoms,
To make divorce of their incorporate league;
That English may as French, French Englishmen
Receive each other. God speak this Amen!

Five centuries divide Agincourt from Mons and the Marne; ill office and fell jealousy have spent their evil energy; the War of the Spanish Succession, the Seven Years' War, and the Napoleonic campaigns are milestones in the long road which had to be traversed, and what the play, working through deadly strife to earnest and honest "paction," really does, we may fairly say, is to symbolise the five centuries of Anglo-French history now in happy though tragic issue.

One might linger in some detail over the varied but always Bensonian merits of the company—Mr. Frank Cochrane's stately Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. A. E. George's delightful Fluellen, Mr. Baliol Holloway's inimitable Pistol, Mr. E. Harcourt Williams' difficult but consistently played Charles VI, Miss Rose Edouin's Hostess, Miss J. S. Mackinlay's Katharine; to do justice to all we should mention all. It can only be said that everyone in the cast works so skilfully and loyally in the interests of the whole that the characters stand out in the degree of their importance to the play rather than as a result of an individual excellence here and there in interpretation. Unfortunately, Mr. Otho Stuart has been prevented by illness from speaking the lines of the Chorus. Shakespeare lovers owe Mr. Benson much; he has done nothing more deserving their gratitude than "Henry V."

EDWARD SALMON.

"David Copperfield"

EVERYONE who writes for the papers appears to be able to lay his hand upon his heart and tell us in flowing numbers how much he dotes upon the genius of Dickens. We have always longed to be of that happy company, but such pleasure has been denied. Yet "David Copperfield" has been something of an exception in the powerful novelist's works, and especially does it stand apart when it is made into a play by Mr. Louis N. Parker and visualised by Sir Herbert Tree and his wisely chosen company at His Majesty's Theatre. If you have believed in Uriah Heep in the printed book, how much more fully will you realise him vividly impersonated by Mr. Charles Quatermaine; if the scene of the dining-room of the Golden Cross is a little vague in your mind, we can undertake to say that the wonderful waiter of Mr. Roy Byford, the three accomplished old fogies of Mr. Mallinson, Mr. Byatt, and Mr. Julian Cross will make it live. Here the splendid early-Victorian Steerforth of Mr. Basil Gill meets again his devoted boyish admirer David, made doubly sympathetic by Mr. Owen Nares. Here we first see the servant Littimer cleverly presented by Mr. Gayer Mackay, and here we learn of the beauty of Little Em'ly and the dark intentions of Steerforth. After this we are sent spinning through four acts and many crowded scenes.

Almost all the parts are played with the greatest skill; there is the quiet charm of Miss Evelyn Millard as Agnes, and the young beauty of Em'ly shown in Miss Jessie Winter; the perfect characterisation of Betsey Trotwood by Miss Agnes Thomas, and the inspired Mrs. Micawber of Miss Sydney Fairbrother. Mrs. Gummidge is very real in the hands of Miss Ada King, and the Martha Endell of Miss Mary Clare and the "Young Gal" of Miss Sybil Sparkes are among the many small parts made convincing. But we have really come to see Sir Herbert double the difficult parts of Dan'l Peggotty and Wilkins Micawber, and, if we are betting men, we are ready to back Micawber to win. As usually happens in such a case, he only gets a place. The winner is Peggotty, for this was the actor's real *tour de force*. His sincerity and deep pathos held the audience spell-bound in what might have been quite awkward situations. All through the action, and notwithstanding the constant changes of make-up, Peggotty was just as real as Dickens made him—nothing overdone, nothing left out, everything that was tender and strong and quietly heroic. Indeed, we are inclined to think it one of the cleverest, most unexpected, and, in its subdued way, the subtlest thing that Sir Herbert has ever done. We gather that his Micawber was generally more popular. To us it seemed unreal, rather overdone, "far-fetched and dear-bought." But this is possibly the fault of the author rather than of the actor. In the volume of "David Copperfield," which the management gave to everyone on the first night, we turn to the preface and find Dickens writing: "No one can ever believe this narrative in the reading more than I believed it in the writing." We certainly do not believe in Micawber so fully as did the author, who is supposed to have drawn him from life. In the novel the fantasy of his being is carefully obscured, but on the stage it stands boldly forth and leaves us a little disconcerted. Much more should be said of the play and the acting, only that the genial Dickens note now sounded at His Majesty's is sure to make all interested in the matter flock thither—and such a throng should fill the theatre for months to come.

"The Dynasts"

THE bold undertaking of preparing some part, at least, of Mr. Thomas Hardy's epic drama for production on the stage of the Kingsway has been carried out with skill and a fine feeling for the atmosphere of the days of Trafalgar, the Peninsula, and Waterloo—the three parts of the vast poem which are now given us. The result of Mr. Granville Barker's labours is highly original, often stimulating, almost always decorative. Throughout the second part of "The Dynasts" there is a strong and admirable suggestion of the gifted Spanish master of painting and sociological observation, Goya. Again and again one recalls with delight his method of grouping and his colour schemes; especially is this so

in the bitter picture of a side-issue of the war in which half-starving British waifs of the army are huddled with their girls in some wayside farm. A painful picture packed with vital force, brave in colouring, and convincing as are almost all the varying phases of the drama. It is quite hopeless and useless to compare "The Dynasts" as seen at the Kingsway with the poem as read in the library, for one would be setting what is merely a small part against a broadly conceived and powerfully expressed whole. The play must be accepted for itself alone, and will be found a moving and often elevating piece of stage work. We own to a certain feeling of horror when we are asked to see such people as Nelson, Wellington, and Napoleon on the stage, but the management at the Kingsway and the excellent and enormous company of actors are quite clever enough to win us from our deeply rooted prejudice. Mr. Hannen as Nelson might, we think, have read the views of M. Joseph Turquan and M. Jules D'Auriac, and studied the portrait of the Admiral by Hoppner, so unheroic is his hero and so just; Mr. Sydney Valentine's Napoleon is more convincing than any we have seen—and he has been pretty frequently on the stage during the last thirty years; and Mr. Murray Carrington's Wellington—like Goya's portrait of the Duke—does not place too splendid a figure before us. Thus all the personages of the play are exactly fitted to their environment, and help our realisation of a great idea at every difficult point. Unfortunately it is impossible to mention dozens of clever people in the cast—there are about one hundred on the programme, but we gain the impression of there being many more characters on the stage. At least we must find room to praise Mr. Henry Ainley in his wonderful performance of "The Reader," who, seated in the front of the lower stage during the whole of the action, helps and delights the audience with his simple elocution and fine voice, and the admirable Strophe of Miss Esmé Beringer, supported by the Antistrophe of Miss Carrie Hasse, will be equally appreciated. We have said enough to show that this remarkable production must be seen, even in war-time, for it is, in a sense, as historic as the events it sets forth. It is a play for our period, a reminder of old heroisms and a picture of national feeling as it appeared in the wars of one hundred years ago. In the new prologue Mr. Hardy says:

In these stern times of ours, when crimson strife
Throws shade on every thoroughfare of life,
Disfigures comely countries with its gore,
And sends back mangled heroes to our shore,
The gift of gifts is sturdy hardihood,
That holds it firm through each vicissitude,
Not only hour by hour, but year by year,
If need be, till life's lurid skies are clear.

That is the spirit in which the audience which flocks to Mr. Barker's theatre appears to take it, and it is also the fine essence of the manner of the production of "The Dynasts." Our hope is that its successful course may long outlast the present war.

EGAN MEW.

MOTORING

IN making an urgent appeal to the public for the provision of motor-ambulances for our Belgian Allies, Mr. W. Joynson-Hicks, chairman of the Automobile Association and Motor Union, points out that the Belgian army is practically without these vehicles. The needs of our own Army in this respect, he says, have been dealt with magnificently by the British Red Cross and the St. John Ambulance Associations, those of the French army by their own countrymen, supplemented by the British Ambulance Committee and by the Automobile Association; but nobody has apparently thought of sending any to the Belgians. A small committee has been formed to remedy this omission. M. Emile Vandervelde, member of the Belgian Government, who comes from the front and is in England on a special mission from the King of the Belgians to his soldiers here, is a member of this committee, and M. de Broqueville, Prime Minister and Minister of War in Belgium, has telegraphed his cordial acceptance of the proposed offer. General Melis, Chief of the Belgian Medical Staff, has represented the urgent necessity of something being done to facilitate the transport of the Belgian wounded, who suffer terribly in ordinary motor-cars, with no possibility of lying down. Through the kindness of the Automobile Association a few cars have already been placed at the disposal of the committee, but many more are required, as well as money for their conversion into ambulances, for the provision of medical stores, and for upkeep. Dr. Depage, of the Croix Rouge de Belgique, states that the most pressing need, after the ambulances, is for small, movable hospitals, at a cost of £300 each, to accommodate twenty-five men; and it is hoped that the public response to Mr. Joynson-Hicks' appeal will enable the committee to assist Dr. Depage in supplying this need also. Promises of further cars, gifts of complete ambulances, or cash subscriptions may be sent to Mr. T. S. Vernon Cocks, to the account of the Anglo-Belgian Field Ambulance Committee with Messrs. Cocks, Biddulph and Co., 43, Charing Cross; or to Mr. W. Joynson-Hicks, Chairman of the Committee, 15, St. James' Place, London.

The motor-ambulance movement initiated by Mr. Arthur du Cros, M.P., continues to make satisfactory progress. Further donations of complete ambulances have just been received from the County of Peeblesshire per Mr. J. M. Cunningham; from the Halcyon Club per Miss Rivington; Messrs. Topham, Limited; the Old Salopian Club per Mr. A. T. Lawrence; the County of Caithness per Mr. Walter Craig; and from Miss Wyatt's School per Miss Oules. Cash subscriptions have also been received from the Yorkshire Insurance Co., Ltd. (£105), the County of Peeblesshire (£50), and the Goldsmiths' Company (£50).

From the balance-sheet of D. Napier and Son, Limited, just issued, we observe that the gross profits of the company from June 4, 1913, the date of its

formation, to September 30, 1914—a period of sixteen months—amounted to £75,197 9s. 11d. After making all necessary provisions for depreciation, interest on debenture stock, income tax, directors' and trustees' fees, etc., there remains a net profit of £45,663 5s. 7d., of which £11,767 4s. 11d. has been carried forward to next year. In the circumstances, the directors are to be congratulated on having achieved such a satisfactory result. During the earlier part of the period covered by the balance-sheet the business was very seriously affected by labour troubles at Acton, involving a complete stoppage of the manufacturing side of the business for more than two months; and, in addition to this, there was the temporary paralysis of trade which was the immediate result of the outbreak of war. Fortunately, the falling off in the demand for private cars has been largely compensated for by the receipt of valuable and extensive contracts for ambulances, motor-lorries, etc., from the British and Russian Governments, and these will doubtless keep things busy until a normal state of affairs returns.

In the Temple of Mammon

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Any of our readers who may be in doubt as regards their securities can obtain the opinion of our City Editor in the next issue of this journal. Each query must contain the name and address of the correspondent, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith. Those correspondents who do not wish their names to appear must choose an initial or pseudonym. Letters to be addressed to the City Editor, 15, Copthall Avenue, London, E.C.

AS I hinted last week the Stock Exchange will formally re-open on January 4. The conditions under which members can do business are even more stringent than those I suggested. It is clear that fixed prices will be enacted for almost every security, and no jobber will be allowed to sell unless he has the securities in his box. Also there is to be no arbitrage business. In short, every kind of trading is to be made as difficult as possible, for all bargains are to be for cash. Naturally, there has been a great deal of grumbling. Small jobbers will be ruined. I do not think that this will be any great loss to the House, for the small jobber has always been a nuisance. Nevertheless, it is not pleasant to be ruined, and nobody faces the prospect without kicking. The Committee declare that it is nothing to do with them, and that the Treasury is responsible. There is to be no dealing in new issues except with the permission of Mr. Lloyd George.

It looks very much as though the rules had been made by some of the big finance houses, who had only one object in view, namely, to get rid of the stock of paper they have in their boxes. If the public can be induced to think that the fixed prices in the House are cheap they may come in and buy. We are certain to see numberless puffs from the financial papers inserted with the express object of luring the public to buy securities. But how will the public benefit? It seems to me that they will be left to carry the baby, an unpleasant and expensive operation.

With regard to dealing for cash, that seems only fair in

these times of war and bad credit, and very few people object. I have not heard many complaints in respect to the refusal to allow arbitrage. Exchange is in such a disorganised condition that it would be practically impossible for an arbitrage house to do a large business. The Treasury say that they have framed the rules in order to prevent enemies from selling stocks and shares on London. But it seems to me that if they had not fixed prices the more shares London is offered the worse it would have been for the enemy. He might have had to sell all his Consols at 40, then we could have bought some big blocks of the National Debt and put the price to 60 again. There are a hundred and one ways of getting money out of Germany if the market is absolutely free, but now we have simply shut down altogether. It is really a confession of weakness and almost of fear that the German is cleverer than we are.

It is a curious thing that the Brazil Railway having defaulted on its bonds should by some means or another have got someone to find them money for the Sorocabana Bonds. It makes us wonder whether there was not something in regard to this issue of Sorocabana that the issuing houses desired to keep dark. In my opinion these bonds are not mortgages at all, but merely preference shares, and the same may be said of Brazil Railway bonds. They should both be sold as quickly as possible, and at any price.

The De Beers Company has decided not to pay its Preference dividend. This has caused a shock to some people, but the Diamond trade is absolutely dead, and it is more than probable that the company has locked up the whole of its funds in loans to the market, and does not wish to borrow. Besides, if the war lasts any length of time diamonds will go completely out of fashion; certainly they are the last thing to be purchased during a war.

A rise has taken place in Van den Berghs, and I advise my readers to sell. This firm has sixteen German houses closely affiliated to the English company, and everyone is asking how they avoid trading with the enemy. The Van den Berghs are very clever men, and they conduct a large trade, but surely the bulk of it must be done through the German houses, and it would be interesting to know whether those houses have closed down or whether they are still trading through the Rotterdam branch. The Van den Berghs themselves are, of course, Dutchmen, but the business was originally a combine between some Dutch and German firms, and I believe that some of the German firms are still nominally in existence. However that may be, Van den Berghs' balance-sheet shows great over-financing, and it is surely safe to sell the shares.

The American position remains very much as it did last week. Wall Street, like London, is terrified of foreign selling, and, like London, only wants to get rid of its securities. During the whole of the coming year I expect the United States will be engaged in shipping foodstuffs and ammunition to the combatants. This will help to pay its large European indebtedness, and by the end of 1915 the balance should be about even. There is still, however, the enormous cotton crop to handle, and it is probable that we may see cotton at 3d. This looks as though it would be a good thing for Lancashire, but it will seriously injure the Egyptian position, so that what we gain in one hand we shall lose with the other.

The Mexican Railway Company has sent out a notice saying that it is unable to meet its interest on the debenture debt. This was fully expected. The railway is well managed, and the misfortunes are not those of the directors' making. When Mexico settles down traffics will be resumed, but when will that be? My information in re-

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gard to Mexico is that the country is in a terrible position, and that it may take some years before it is able even to do ordinary business.

There are very few reports to comment upon this week, but Barratt and Company have made over £40,000, and once again pay an additional half per cent. dividend on the preference. The Newcastle Breweries have also had a good year, profits being only slightly down, but the board is very despondent in regard to the future.

RAYMOND RADCLYFFE.

THE PEKIN SYNDICATE.

THE CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH.

The meeting of the Pekin Syndicate, Ltd., was held at the Cannon Street Hotel on Wednesday, Mr. René de Cérenville presiding. The Chairman said:—

On account of the war, and of the strained and disturbed situation which preceded and has followed the present crisis, the number of directors attending this meeting is exceptionally small. Count du Chaylard has been obliged, through private duties, to remain in France, whilst Count de Segurier, as a captain in the French Artillery, is busy on the fighting-line somewhere in the region of the Aisne. Lord Carrick, whom we had been glad to appoint chairman recently, and who is likewise performing military duties, has found it necessary, much to our regret, to resign for personal reasons. Two directors—Mr. Chantrey Iachbald and Mr. Charles Victor—have retired from the Board. The former had acquired a great experience of Chinese affairs in the employ of a leading French Bank, and had afterwards been appointed London manager of another leading foreign bank. Therefore, on more than one occasion, his advice was most useful to the company.

Mr. Victor, well known on the other side of the Channel, as a man of wide financial experience and tireless perseverance, has played a most important part in introducing into the French market the Shansi shares, and has never ceased to secure for the company the support of a large body of shareholders. I am sure you will accord both these gentlemen a hearty vote of thanks for their services.

With your permission I propose to adopt the customary practice of considering the report and account as read. It will be remembered that in the report of the Joint Consulting and Mining Engineers a year ago reference was made to the disease known as "miner's worm," which had obtained a hold at the mines, and it was stated that strenuous efforts were being made to eradicate it. The directors are glad to be able to state that a recent report from the medical officer at the mines certifies that the disease has now been entirely eradicated, and that no new case, among either the native or foreign staffs, has come under his notice since the previous report.

It is true, as mentioned in the report, that the European troubles temporarily interfere with our affairs; for instance, our sales have been curtailed; part of the staff have joined the colours; our colliers have been chartered by the British Admiralty; a certain amount of coal has been seized, and, of course, not paid for by the German authorities in Shantung; shipping and mail facilities between Europe and the Far East have been and are either stopped or delayed, but the company's property has not been, and is not likely to be, interfered with. There is no sign of any feeling against foreigners, and it is to be expected that in Chinese, as well as in European affairs, the joint British and French interests will ultimately profit by a better notion of civilised and peaceful methods, such as the Chinese people, for historical reasons, are more apt than anyone else to appreciate and reciprocate.

Some shareholders, I understand, are somewhat doubtful as to the policy which has been recommended by

the Board in the latest annual and interim report of a closer co-operation between the company and the Chinese authorities. In this respect I am glad to say that negotiations with the provincial authorities in view of facilitating improved working conditions and extending operations which have been in progress some time have now reached a stage when a satisfactory settlement may be confidently anticipated and that a preliminary agreement to this effect has already been signed, particulars of which cannot be disclosed until negotiations are completed.

According to this news, we have full confidence that our contract with the Central and Provincial Government will be made to work more smoothly than ever, and I hope more profitably.

The directors regret, however, that they are unable to recommend the distribution of a dividend. No one can foresee the developments of the present crisis in financial affairs, and it is, therefore, a duty more imperative than ever to husband the company's resources until we can sail in smooth waters again, and not to enter into the dividend-paying stage at a time when older and more firmly established concerns are experiencing difficulties in this respect.

We received last week a cheque for £20,000 from the Government of the Republic of China; the interest in respect of Coupon No. 19, due January 1, 1915, on the Chinese Government Honan Railway Five per Cent. (Gold) Loan. It is especially gratifying at this juncture, and at the present time, to again mention that the Chinese Government has never failed to fulfil its obligations. I propose that the directors' report and accounts made up to June 30, 1914, be, and the same are, hereby received and adopted.

The report was adopted and a vote of thanks passed to the Chairman.

The Red Cross Motor Ambulance

Subscriptions to this fund for presenting a Napier Motor Ambulance Car valued at £625 to the Red Cross Society are coming in very slowly. We ask our readers to let us have a note of sums collected. The £100 guaranteed provisionally depends on our receiving the balance of £525. So far the amounts received are:—

Provisionally promised	£100	0	0
Miss Margaret Eastwood	5	5	0
E. G. F. S.	4	10	0
Collected by Mr. F. W. Hingston of Buckhurst Hill, Essex:—F. W. Hingston, 5s.; Mrs. Hingston, 5s.; E. F. F. Hingston, 5s.; C. D. Coxall, 5s.; Frank G. Foster, 5s.; H. E. Swann, 5s.	1	10	0
Norfolk House High School, Muswell Hill...	2	15	8
Miss I. M. Ray	4	6	
Bernard Phillips	3	4	
H. D. S.	3	8	
P. F. Loft	16	2	
G. H. S.	1	1	0
The Queenlette	7	6	
Miss M. Smith	16	0	

£117 12 10½

Next week's ACADEMY will contain an article of peculiar interest to Auction Bridge players on "Nullos," by Mr. Taunton Williams, who, in our issue of November 21, wrote on "The Misnomer of Royal Auction."

BELGIAN FIELD HOSPITAL.

Patron : H.M. The Queen of the Belgians.

President :

THE LORD SYDENHAM, G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., F.R.S.

Commandant :

W. S. PERRIN, Esq., M.C. (Cantab), F.R.C.S., London.

The only Surgical Hospital in Belgium supported by British money and worked by a British Staff.

The Hospital is located at Furnes, in Belgium, within ten miles of the fighting line, and will follow the Belgian Army as it moves. During the hard fighting over a thousand patients were treated in four weeks. The hospital is now full.

At least **£120** a week required for current expenses.

Please send a New Year's offering on behalf of the Belgian wounded to W. S. Baillie Hamilton, Esq., Secretary, The Belgian Field Hospital, 21, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, S.W.